**Nursing Protocol Concerning Adolescents Seeking Counseling Regarding Birth Control, Pregnancy, Sexually Transmitted Diseases or Emotional Health Issues**

General Considerations:

The School Nurse is available for counseling and providing information regarding the availability of health services for students with emotional and physical health concerns. The nurse can serve as a liaison person with the student, parents, school, and other health professionals. As an advocate for the student, the nurse emphasizes responsible behaviors and helps the student learn what such behaviors entail. Areas of discussion include:

* Problem identification
* Appropriate and responsible decision-making
* Resources and treatment programs available for health care
* Goal setting and health care time lines
* Communication with parents and significant others

Confidentiality of the student is respected. In the school setting, federal and state laws and school district record policies regarding confidentiality primarily address the safe keeping of student records. However, in the nurse/client student relationship, confidentiality extends to the client's right to privacy and the nurse's duty to refrain from disclosing private information learned in the context of that particular relationship. In some circumstances, confidential information may be disclosed to others with a need or right to know:

* The written consent of the parent/guardian has been obtained
* Medical or psychiatric emergency
* Court order
* Required audit
* Child abuse
* Crime has been or is about to be committed

Specific Guidelines:

The nurse will:

1. Encourage student verbalization to identify the problem or condemn.
2. Teach and support the student through the process of identifying responsible behavior and appropriate decision-making.
3. Provide the student with information regarding availability of health services including:
   1. Location, phone numbers, and business hours of health care professionals.
   2. Testing sites for sexually transmitted diseases (STD's), HIV/AIDS, and pregnancy.
   3. Community education and support programs for alcohol and drug abuse, pregnancy, emotional health issues.
4. Advise the student to seek family support during problem resolution. Be available to support the student as needed in the event that a formal meeting between parent/student is arranged to discuss the issues.
5. Be frank with the student regarding constraints on confidentiality that are a possibility when the student is adamantly opposed to parental/guardian involvement in the situation. Inform the student that the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) gives parents the right to inspect all records that a school maintains on their children and the opportunity to challenge the accuracy of the records. In addition, parents must consent to the release of a student's record or assessment information to agencies outside of designated educational categories; A student who is 18 years old may consent to the release of his/her own records.
6. Recommend and refer for appropriate medical evaluation for the presenting concern.
7. Continue to be in contact with the student through resolution for the problem/concern.
8. If the student is pregnant and remains in school, the nurse will coordinate services with school counselors, community agencies, and medical services to enable the student to continue her education and maintain a healthy lifestyle during the pregnancy. The nurse will be available to the student and the physician for monitoring purposes to help with prompt intervention should a problem develop.
9. Alert the school administrator should a potential life-threatening situation arise.
10. Serve as an intermediary in the event that a student is identified by a State Health Agency as a contact of a person diagnosed with a sexually transmitted disease. The nurse will communicate to the student the urgent need to contact the health care provider for further information.

The student will:

1. Make the contact for the health care appointment utilizing the moral support of the nurse as needed.
2. Schedule health care appointments for after school hours.
3. Provide for personal transportation to health care appointments.
4. Provide a written excuse from class from the parent/guardian if the health care appointment is scheduled during school hours.

The nurse will not:

1. Make the health care appointment for the student.
2. Excuse the student from class for a health care appointment UNLESS personally directed to do so by the parent.
3. Transport the student to the health care appointment.
4. Become an intermediary for messages between the health care agency and the student with the exception of the student who is a contact of a person diagnosed with a sexually transmitted disease.